VOGUE®

DESTINATION SUMMER:
FASHION TRAVELS THROUGH EUROPE, AFRICA & ASIA

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7 STYLE IDEAS TO *HEAT UP* THE SEASON

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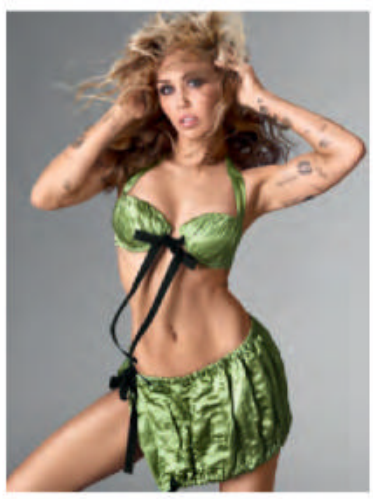

OLIVER HADLEE PEARCH

COVER LOOKS

This month, Vogue is published with two different covers. Above, left: Miley Cyrus wears custom-made bikini and sarong, PRADA. *Above, right: patent-leather trench coat, cut-out swimsuit, and patent-leather boots,* ALAIA. *Get the look: make-up by* PAT McGRATH LABS. *Eyes: Mothership I: Subliminal Eyeshadow Palette and FetishEyes Mascara. Lips: Lip Fetish Balm Divinyl Lip Shine in Nude Venus. Skin: Skin Fetish: Sublime Perfection Foundation and Skin Fetish: Divine Blush in Fleurtatious. Hair:* GUIDO. *Make-up:* PAT McGRATH. *Nails:* JIN SOON CHOI. *Photograph:* STEVEN MEISEL. *Styling:* EDWARD ENNINFUL

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against the beauty, space and unique magic of Sichuan, in southwestern China. Even our Trends section, on page 53, comes to us from Sri Lanka, as Nick Sethi photographs the latest key pieces, from perfect shirtdresses to maxiskirts.

And the travel doesn't stop with fashion. On page 78, Vogue has an exclusive audience with legendary Chilean author Isabel Allende at her home in northern California. Allende's extraordinary new novel, The Wind Knows My Name, charts the twin timelines of two child refugees, one fleeing Nazi Germany, one arriving in Trump's America. Having turned 80 last year, it's thrilling to see her skill and compassion in full force. Meanwhile in Rome, on page 88, Elly Schlein, rising star of Italian politics, offers some sentient pointers for how we all can better contribute to our societies, while in Exchanging Glances, on page 164, we celebrate the best of South Korea's skincare geniuses, their effect photographed beautifully by Cho Gi-Seok.

Last, but by no means least, live from New York, it's Miley Cyrus. This month's cover star travelled from her home in Los Angeles to meet photographer Steven Meisel and myself in Manhattan for two days of fashion, fun and hilarity. What a life Miley has led and how wonderful it is to see her having such a brilliant year. "Flowers", her instantly classic anthem of self-love, has topped the charts week after week both here and in the States, and her fashion moves have never been chicer. Miley has been through it over the years and doesn't do much press, so it's a rare treat to have her speaking so candidly about her unique life, on page 138. To top it all, her album Endless Summer Vacation couldn't be a more perfect soundtrack for this sunniest of June issues. Enjoy.

Above: in Into The Great Wide Open, on page 192, model PAN HAOWEN *wears jacket and skirt,* GUCCI. *Shoes,* CHLOE. *Below:* MILEY CYRUS *is photographed by Steven Meisel for this month's cover story, on page 138*

NADINE IJEWERE; REVEN LEI; STEVEN MEISEL

GUCCI
FLORA
GORGEOUS JASMINE
GUCCI
FLORA
GORGEOUS JASMINE
GUCCI
FLORA
GORGEOUS JASMINE
The New Eau de Parfum
#FloraFantasy

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THE eyes of the STORM

MILEY CYRUS*'s reputation as the wildly talented TV princess turned pop* PROVOCATEUR *may precede her, but beneath the stories, the* SONGS *and the* HEADLINES, GILES HATTERSLEY *discovers a superstar at* PEACE *with herself. Photographs by* STEVEN MEISEL. *Styling by* EDWARD ENNINFUL

"I wear my empowerment at all times," says pop superstar Miley Cyrus. "I don't need to profess it."

White-gold, diamond and sapphire ring, CHOPARD

"A lot of headlines have said, 'This is Miley's moment.' And I'm like, 'That's exactly what it is.'"

Cashmere cape and smocked body, DIOR BY MARIA GRAZIA CHIURI. *Leather sandals,* PIFERI, *at Browns*

Stretch-cady bathing suit with peau de soie bow,
VALENTINO LE CLUB COUTURE

Miley

iley Cyrus explodes into the room in a black Saint Laurent slip dress, a two-foot Gucci beefeater-style hat on her head.

"Is it *sickening*," she demands rhetorically, her delicious southern rasp familiar in a way only a squillion light years of celebrity living can make it. In her thrall, festooned around the suite on the 33rd floor of The Ritz-Carlton New York, NoMad, sit her travelling chorus of creatives, the indispensable "comfort blanket" of five men who embody the sort of modern Hollywood bohemia she adores, and who accordingly she goes everywhere with. They offer consensus: *yes*. Just to be sure she struts the room wall-to-wall, eyes darting.

Cyrus – now 30 (how is she only 30?), with several lifetimes of glory, nonsense, trauma and good times under her belt – is in showgirl mode. For the moment, at least. My word, she's a gas. "What is with this art?" she asks hammily between poses, offended by some neutral swirls in a picture frame. Then she catches sight of herself on the iPhone screen of Stephen Galloway, acclaimed choreographer and her friend. "It's giving Pat Loveless," she decrees, patting the towering fluffy black helmet to the delight of her troop, before launching into a funny, gossipy tale about said Patty, the bouffanted country singer, who she met recently and who asked her to pass her best on to Cyrus's godmother, Dolly Parton, which > 148

"I carried some guilt and shame around myself for years because of how much controversy and upset I really caused."

Halterneck bikini top and glass-pearl and strass earring, CHANEL

"'Flowers' is a little fake it till you make it – which I'm a big fan of."

Patent-leather trench coat, cut-out swimsuit, and patent-leather boots, ALAIA

Stretch-velvet body and bracelets, SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO

"Do I want to LIVE my
LIFE for ANYONE else's
PLEASURE or fulfilment
other than MY OWN?"

Stretch viscose knit bandeau bra and knickers, FERRAGAMO. *Mesh gloves,* C'EST JEANNE. *Gold, platinum, rubellite and diamond ring,* TIFFANY & CO

"I wouldn't ERASE MY STORY *or want it to be erased. Having an* INTERESTING *life makes for interesting* STORYTELLING"

she dutifully did. Parton sweetly replied, "Oh, Patty, I haven't seen her in years."

"But *thennn*," says Cyrus, tingling with delight, "I went on to Patty's Instagram and what do you know? There's a photo of Patty with Dolly [taken recently]! Country shade," she declares of her beloved Dolly: "You can't beat it." She dives on to the bed next to me, shaking out her bleachy, rooty, sexy hair. Fear not. The monologue keeps going: "Dinosaur dust art"; "These earrings are *not* it"; "Am I going on tour? Yeah, the Aman hotel tour. Singing in the lobby for that complimentary massage."

To wit: a gas. Although you can't help noticing it takes close to 20 minutes for Cyrus to sustain eye contact that lasts longer than a second. She is, seemingly, not a person who takes joy in the novelty of strangers, who doesn't trust them right away. Frankly, why should she?

But while the initial energy is remote and flighty, it takes absolutely no time at all to become riveted by her. Astonishingly famous since her early teens, hers is a fate perhaps only understood by a handful of people during mass media's relatively short history. One's reductive first instinct is to interpret her thrilling lack of chill as toxic-media-induced, post-child-stardom neurosis. But she is having none of that.

The shopworn narrative of a famous woman's survival and triumph? "So f**king basic." Some time later, when it's only us chatting, she says, "One thing I wouldn't want this story to become is a complaint of being a woman in the industry. I don't need this to be a women's empowerment story. I wear my empowerment at all times. I don't need to profess it."

In truth, she is sage, witty and unpredictable, prone to find the whole machinery of fame ridiculous and damaging – especially for women. She is essentially done with engaging or even talking about the whole rodeo. Certainly in trad media terms. "Why would I do British *Vogue*?" she wonders aloud at one point later, just the two of us on a sofa. "Why would I even do an interview?" She seems genuinely curious to have found herself here.

Well, real talk. She was dying to be photographed by Steven Meisel. She also happens to be enjoying one of the most successful years of her career as a musician, to say nothing of her arrival at a new fashion peak, thanks to a fabulous run of vintage looks at her New Year's Eve special for American network television, and a smattering of judicious appearances, including at the Versace runway show in LA in the days before the Oscars (an absolute fashion nut, she is quick to credit her beloved personal stylist Bradley Kenneth's hand in her current era of killer looks).

Then there is "Flowers". At the time of writing, the song – an addictive comeback single that has made its way to instant classic status – has > 200

Duchesse-satin cape, Lycra bra and knickers embellished with Swarovski crystals, and silk-satin gloves, ATELIER VERSACE. *For stockists, all pages, see Vogue Information. Hair:* GUIDO. *Make-up:* PAT McGRATH. *Nails:* JIN SOON CHOI. *Production:* PRODN. *Digital artwork:* DTOUCH LONDON

spent eight weeks at the top of the US Billboard charts, with another 10 consecutive at No1 in the UK. Released in January, at this point its staying power is so remarkable it seems in danger of becoming the song of the summer. Who knows. Given the album is called *Endless Summer Vacation* – which, for Miley, is as much lifestyle mantra as record title – perhaps it will?

She achieved her latest internet-smashing moment despite doing next to no press. A boss move. Instead, she tossed the song out into the world and let social media eat itself alive. Are the lyrics of self-care and personal triumph ("I can love me better than you can") a direct riposte to her ex-husband, the Australian actor Liam Hemsworth? Did the video, with more than 410 million views on YouTube (and counting), exquisitely directed by Jacob Bixenman, with nods to Helmut Newton and Michael Mann, really feature Cyrus wearing one of Hemsworth's old tux jackets?

She has no time for any of this. "I never need to be a master at the craft of tricking an audience," she says, shrugging. "It will set itself on fire all by itself." Rather than an explicit diary of her experience, she says she simply wanted to make a song that she could do with hearing. "I wrote it in a really different way. The chorus was originally: 'I can buy myself flowers, write my name in the sand, but I can't love me better than you can.' It used to be more, like, 1950s. The saddest song. Like: 'Sure, I can be my own lover, but you're so much better,'" she says. In the end she rejected the gloom. "The song is a little fake it till you make it," she says. "Which I'm a big fan of."

She immediately sensed it was a hit – "I've been doing this for a while" – and so the night of the release she went out dancing with her crew at the Sunset club at The West Hollywood Edition. "I'm sober. I don't drink, I don't… you know, but I celebrate. It's like one o'clock in the morning and Lil Nas X walks into the club and he asks me the most interesting question. He said: 'Are you so anxious about how successful 'Flowers' is?'"

She thinks about it again now. "I was like, 'No. I might be No1 now, but No2 is on its way.' Everything is seasonal," she says, her grey-blue eyes finally alighting on mine. She thinks we all need to be more honest about the false god of unfluctuating success – even pop stars. "A lot of headlines [recently] have said, 'This is Miley's moment.' And I'm like, 'That's exactly what it is. It's a moment. And it will be over.'"

"That's not pessimistic," she continues, smiling. "That's honest and that's OK with me. I actually prefer it. I don't like to stay big." When *Endless Summer Vacation* was released she wasn't even in LA and didn't have her phone with her. "My boyfriend brings his phone and I don't bring one. I had no way of knowing what number it would [chart at], and it wasn't of importance to me because it wouldn't have changed anything. Someone could say, 'It would be this number if you did that, or this number if you sell your soul…'" She shrugs again. "I've been in the Garden of Eden before and I've taken the red apple, and it never feels good."

So here we are. Miley's first sit-down interview in some time and she'll be damned if she's going to sell herself to me or you. She knows what that game looks like too well. I'm not sure anyone who didn't achieve global prominence in the entertainment industry as a teen in the distinct quagmire of Noughties media could understand it better. First, of course, came *Hannah Montana*, the crazily successful Disney show began in 2006, in which she played a teenage pop star with a double life, that became such a phenomenon that she ended up selling out stadiums around the world in minutes (the *Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert* becoming the highest-selling concert film of all time). A daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, she has been managed by her adored mother Tish since day one, while her adolescent life was a truly head-spinning mix of standard Tennessee home life plus superstar day job, with a top note of prurient, morally muddled public interest in her coming of age that was, even at the time, distinctly gross.

It certainly sounds like too much for a person to handle, but I will say it's made Cyrus incredibly smart. She is unique among anyone I've interviewed in her assessment of fame; she is almost Neo-esque in her ability to see the green code of the matrix around her. "I'm actually not an attention-seeking person, sitting here as a 30-year-old grown woman," she says. Miley's aware that her explosion into early adulthood, whether riding naked on a demolition ball in the video for "Wrecking Ball" or her twerk-tastic performance at the 2013 MTV Music Video Awards, still occupies space in the public consciousness. "I was creating attention for myself because I was dividing myself from a character I had played. Anyone, when you're 20 or 21, you have more to prove. 'I'm not my parents.' 'I am who I am.'"

She is movingly even-natured when she goes on to describe the fallout: "I carried some guilt and shame around myself for years because of how much controversy and upset I really caused," she says. "Now that I'm an adult, I realise how harshly I was judged. I was harshly judged as a child by adults and now, as an adult, I realise that I would never harshly judge a child."

Her tone is that of a person who has processed her fury. But wow. Sometimes she laughs about it. A friend asked her for some skincare advice recently and in a joking response she sent them a story a tabloid magazine ran a decade ago in which they'd highlighted her acne and gone with the headline: "A Breakout Year!" Jesus. "Right? Like who thought that I was not a person who would be hurt by that? Like I was clearly a 20-year-old girl. Sure, at 20 I was like every 20-year-old. You think you're grown, but now I'm like, 'Oh, no, I was fully a kid.'" She still gets weirded out by what she sees published about herself. "I was reading this thing the other day about women in the industry who don't have children and I was on the list," she says, alongside the likes of Helen Mirren, Oprah Winfrey and Dolly. Her takeaway? She's done trying to tool her statements or make life choices that are about making everyone happy.

Interestingly, for someone with more than 206 million Instagram followers, this extends to her fans. Don't get her wrong. She's grateful. But says she can't live her life for them anymore. She loves an audience but not in the way she grew up on. "Look, the kiki follows me everywhere that I go," she says of Galloway, Bixenman and Kenneth, as well Bob Recine and James Kaliardos (her personal hair and make-up team), all of whom are kicking around today. "I love performing but pretty much for them," she says, smiling. "Like singing for hundreds of thousands of people isn't really the thing that I love. There's no connection. There's no safety." I guess it's pretty hard to people-please 100,000 individuals simultaneously? "Right," she says, nodding. "It's also not natural. It's so isolating because if you're in front of 100,000 people then you are alone."

Cyrus was known to give everything on tour. She would perform for hours, take requests, not quit that stage until she was pretty sure every single person had had the night of their lives, swaying to "We Can't Stop", bouncing to "Party in the USA", shedding a tear to "The Climb". Now she's not sure she can do it anymore; certainly not in the foreseeable. "It's been a minute," she says of her years-long hiatus. "After the last [headline arena] show I did [in 2014], I kind of looked at it as more of a question. And I can't. Not only 'can't'," she self-corrects, "because

"I've been in the GARDEN *of* EDEN *before and I've* TAKEN *the red* APPLE, *and it* NEVER *feels* GOOD"

can't is your capability, but my desire. Do I want to live my life for anyone else's pleasure or fulfilment other than my own? And, you know what…" she lets her conclusion hang in the air.

It's led to a fascinatingly radical approach to a mega, modern pop career. During the past decade, she's released some of her finest tracks – "Nothing Breaks Like a Heart", "Midnight Sky", "Flowers" (of course) – while her supreme gifts as a vocalist have never been so lauded. Everyone from Elton John to Gloria Gaynor rates her among the best vocal stylists in the business. But her life now, she explains, is dedicated to her own happiness. The traditional cycle of album, tours and strategic collaborations hold little interest. The work she chooses has to speak to her experience.

C

yrus and Hemsworth divorced in 2020 and, despite the plethora of Twitter theorisers, she is allergic to the idea of people seeing *Endless Summer Vacation*, or any of her recent music, being directly about that relationship. "I wouldn't erase my story or want it to be erased," she says of that 10-year relationship coming to an end. "Having an interesting life makes for interesting storytelling," she adds, explaining she sees herself more as a novelist, weaving myriad experiences into any given track. A couple of summers back she started dating Maxx Morando, drummer with the band Liily and a gifted songwriter and producer, who she's made a handful of public outings with. "We got put on a blind date," she says of how they met. "Well, it was blind for me and not really for him. I thought, 'The worst that can happen is I leave.'" When he calls mid-interview her phone starts playing "Tyrone" by Erykah Badu. "I call that 'boyfriend sexy ringtone'," she says, smiling.

These days, Cyrus lives in some splendour in LA, surrounded by her beloved artworks, her closets deep with fashion, and a revolving door of friends and family. She adores fitness – everything from ViPR to TRX training to dance and partner work, so she often has friends over to work out. She's not big on gender definitions for herself; a few years ago she floated the idea of pansexuality but seems to have evolved beyond the need for a label, personally. She says: "I only hang out with, like, gay men. So they come over, and we do a whole class based off of Nicki Minaj or we have a Britney series. I have a Madonna 'Vogue' series, which is doing the entire bow choreography with, like, our little weights." She laughs.

Everyone asks her for fitness advice, though she offers it with a pinch of salt. "I actually had this idea of doing kind of like a wellness comedy, which was me basically saying, 'I'm Miley Cyrus and I'm a pop star and I can't tell you what to eat or what supplements to take because I haven't seen your lab work.'" She's big on journalling and pulls up an entry on her phone and reads it to me: "I make choices that I'm proud of that protect me… I put my mental and physical health before a paycheque… I freed up space for myself to be with friends and family doing what I love, which is working out, eating well, learning ways about how to enhance my life, staying dedicated to practices and protocols that are specifically designed for me."

She works with "amazing" healers, and adds that more recently: "I did a lot of EMDR." She started the eye-movement, memory-linked trauma therapy a little over a year ago. "It's so helpful," she says. "Essentially, you delete the physical sensations associated with these painful memories. The EMDR really helped me."

While eschewing the child-star clichés, she agrees that her life has not been straightforward. A certain toll has made its way to her body, and she has chronic pain and inflammation, which descends whenever she's overdone it. "After the album [came out] I had a flare-up," she says of an episode earlier this year. "I was in a lot of pain. I had gone to the Gucci release party, I had gone to Versace, you know, my adrenals had been kind of drained, and I was kind of back into the pop star thing and I noticed I had this flare-up. And then when I went skiing, which doesn't make a lot of sense because it's, like, super active, but I felt better. I think it was because I was anonymous in my ski gear. I had my big goggles on, you know, and no one would ever know who I am."

Her best strategy is, she explains, to keep everything real. She says recently, a songwriter came to her with a track. "It was like, you know, the standard f**ked up in the club track. And I was like, 'I'm two years sober. That's not where I spend my time, you know. You're more likely to catch me and my friends literally walking through rose gardens or going to a museum.'" She laughs. "It's not about being self-serious. I'm just evolved."

It inspired her to write a different song. She hopes to release it soon, she explains, as she recites a line from it to me, her eye contact steady, her voice calm.

"I know I used to be crazy," she says. "I know I used to be fun. You say I used to be wild. I say I used to be young."